

# **Washington Student Achievement Council**

## **Washington Student Achievement Council to focus on educational attainment**

As of July 1, 2012, the Washington Student Achievement Council is taking over the most of the responsibilities previously assigned to the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The Washington Student Achievement Council is a new state agency created during the 2012 Legislative Session to provide focus and propose goals for increasing educational attainment in the state.

### **Overview**

- ◆ Washington Student Achievement Council established July 1, 2012.
- ◆ Most duties and staff of the Higher Education Coordinating Board were carried forward to the new agency. Don Bennett, executive director of the HECB, is continuing as executive director of the Council during the transition period.
- ◆ Duties of the agency include administering financial aid programs in Washington, administering the GET college savings program, protecting education consumers, and strategic planning.
- ◆ The Council will consist of nine members, five representing the public and appointed by the Governor and four representing major education sectors.
- ◆ The Council is to propose goals to increase educational attainment in Washington; recommend resources needed to achieve the goals and monitor progress. Specific emphasis is on improving student transitions from secondary to postsecondary education.
- ◆ New Joint Higher Education Legislative Committee will review the work of the Council; recommend new higher education policy; and focus on improving coordination among institutions, education sectors, and the Legislature.

The nine-member Council is being appointed this summer. The citizen members will be appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate. In making these appointments, consideration will be given to citizens representing labor, business, women, racial and ethnic minorities, as well as geographic representation, to ensure that the Council's membership reflects the state's diverse population. The Council is required to meet four times a year, or more frequently at the discretion of its chair.

The staff of the new agency continues to perform most of the work they previously did for the HECB, including administering student financial assistance programs and GET; protecting education consumers; developing a statewide strategic plan for higher education; making financing recommendations linked to major strategic goals; and conducting research and policy analysis.

The mission of the new Council is to link the work of the secondary schools, higher education institutions, and state education agencies. The focus of this work will be on improving educational outcomes at all levels; proposing improvements and innovations needed to continually adapt the state's educational institutions to evolving needs; and engaging in public advocacy with emphasis the economic, social, and civic benefits of higher education, and the need for increased financial support and civic commitment.

Learn more about the Washington Student Achievement Council [www.wsac.wa.gov/AboutTheCouncil](http://www.wsac.wa.gov/AboutTheCouncil).